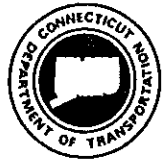


STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Office of the
Commissioner

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Public Hearing - February 4, 2013 Transportation Committee

**Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Jim Redeker
Department of Transportation**

Proposed S.B. 641 - An Act Concerning Consultation Between the Department of Transportation and Regional Planning Agencies Prior to the Commencement of Certain Transportation Infrastructure Projects.

Proposed S.B. 641 would require the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) to consult with regional planning agencies during the planning phase of any large project, and it would require the regional agency to prepare an analysis of the economic impacts of the project.

The Department is in full agreement with the goal of evaluating economic impacts of major projects during the planning phase of a project. However, since ConnDOT is already integrating economic analysis into its planning process, we believe this legislation is not needed. Furthermore, the requirement that the Department consult with regional planning agencies on such matters is not needed since federal law already dictates a comprehensive consultation process between the state DOT and regional planning agencies.

The Department understands the important linkage between transportation investments and the State's economic growth. As a result, we have included economic assessments in some recent major studies such as the I-84/Route 8 Needs and Deficiencies Study in Waterbury. The Department is currently contracting with the CT Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) to identify better economic analysis methods to use for all major projects.

The goal of the CASE study is to identify the most appropriate economic analysis method for transportation investments, and then develop specific analytic tools and processes. These need to be tools that can be easily adapted to all our major projects -- regardless of the type transport mode or area of the state being analyzed.

Analyzing economic impacts can be expensive complex, and it requires appropriate tools and expertise. As such, the Department with assistance from CASE will evaluate whether the expertise can be developed in-house, whether we should partner with other state agencies or universities for services, or whether we should hire consultants. We do not believe the regional planning agencies have the necessary expertise to conduct such analyses.

The Department is aware that some communities believe that this legislation is needed to better coordinate Department investments in new or improved rail stations and to encourage more communities to adopt plans and zoning for transit-orient development (TOD) in advance of station investments by the Department. ConnDOT supports these objectives, but notes that separate efforts are already underway in the Department and through the Governor's Interagency TOD Working Group to support TOD planning and implementation. These two TOD

initiatives will address concerns raised by some communities, and do so in a more direct manner than a broad requirement that an economic analysis be conducted for all major highway and transit investments.

For further information or questions, please contact Pam Sucato, Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Transportation, at (860) 594-3013.